



The Disabled Rambler

The Newsletter of the Disabled Ramblers

October 2007

A charitable company : Registered Charity No. 1103508

Hebridean Holiday – Summer 2007

Outer Islands Revisited after 43 years !

I well remember my previous visit to the Outer Hebrides. It was the summer of 1964 and I was the proud owner of a new Mini which comfortably took myself, my wife and a load of camping gear. It was early in the summer, and we made use of the new Calmac ferry from Uig in Skye, crossing the 'Little Minch' to Tarbert on Harris. On the very first day we took a minor road to the small settlement of Husinish, journeying along a narrow, spectacular, single lane road through a desolate rock and bog mountain landscape. At the end of the road there is a small area of 'machair', essentially sand covered by about 18 inches of fertile top soil, grass covered with many wild flowers. We had a reasonable night, punctuated by two squalls which almost blew the tent away. Next morning milk mysteriously appeared delivered by a silent man who we only saw from the waist downwards! We had a great holiday, camping often in mist and rain. The farm dogs were unfriendly – you see, we were among the first tourists to visit these remote islands.



Airfield with a View

In July of 2007 we went back, travelling by the same ferry, but this time staying in hotels and B&B.. I am disabled now, and need pampering. Amazingly in three weeks we had just one wet day amid much sunshine, and with very few midges to trouble us. We read, with amazement about terrible floods in Gloucestershire and in our home town of Maidenhead. We revisited Husinish, to find just one small change with public toilets (including a disabled feature) now coyly in place. The scenery varies a great deal. Harris is grand, rocky, and mountainous. North Uist and Benbecula are largely flat, South Uist has a few mountains and, finally, Barra, a much smaller island, has hills and deserted beaches,

as well as the famous airfield where the daily Glasgow flights land and take off on the beach. A common factor is the road system, very twisty with just a single lane with passing places. Here and there the roads have been widened, and you suddenly encounter a two lane piece with a central white line, which just as quickly reverts to a single lane, usually around the corner. I revelled in these roads – you see I could poodle along in my car at around 15-20mph admiring the scenery. Occasionally a car would come up behind, at which I would pull into one of the frequent passing places to allow overtaking. Driving like this is bliss, completely impossible on normal two-lane roads where motorists, driven on by machismo, insist on driving at the highest speed possible. For accommodation we stayed in a variety of places. On the way up, we stayed in the Loch Leven Hotel near Fort William, and enjoyed a roll-in shower with a decent folding seat, followed in Portree on Skye with a stay at a remarkable manor house, Viewfield House, still run by the MacDonald family. The accessible room was very spacious, again with a good usable roll in shower. On Harris, we stayed in absolute luxury at a small gourmet hotel, Ardhasaig House, which was in a lovely setting serving fabulous food. This was very expensive. The bathroom had a bath fitted with a shower seat, which was raised by an improvised arrangement, suitable for my needs. On North Uist, we stayed in the hamlet of Carinish, at the aptly named Temple View Hotel., situated opposite the ruins of a large 14th Century Church. Finally, on Barra, we stayed at a converted school, now renamed Northbay House, and offering good comfort and B&B facilities. Both of the last two places mentioned above have roll in showers, but equipped with rather small folding shower stools. I could manage these, but required a hosing down technique administered gleefully by my wife! I have decided to acquire my own adjustable shower stool which should be usable almost anywhere where needed.

Altogether, a most delightful holiday, deserted white sandy beaches by the frequent stretches of 'machair', wonderful views, fabulous bird life, a sea with basking sharks, and even a sighting of the elusive otter. It is good that it is now possible for disabled people to visit – even if unable to stand or walk.

Mike Bruton

Letter from Mike Bruton, Chairman of the Disabled Ramblers

Dear Friends,

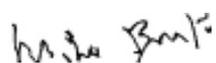
We have now reached the end of yet another Summer rambling season and we can look back over another highly enjoyable time. Despite the poor summer weather, we have been generally fortunate with relatively little inconvenience caused by rain. The numbers attending each ramble have risen quite steeply this year, partly due to a high take up of our new loan buggy service. We now have four machines available. Initially, in 2005, we acquired two scooters to go with our new mobile support unit. This stock, for lending out, has been augmented this year by a long term loan of a Trampler, and the purchase of a fourth machine. All four scooters are now fully booked for nearly every ramble!

Our mobile support unit, of course, also incorporates a portable toilet, and this has also proved a great success and is much appreciated, particularly by the ladies who make up at least 50% of our participating disabled ramblers. We now generally ensure that a toilet is available at the start and finish of each ramble, and also at each lunchtime. This may be a public disabled accessible loo if available, or, if necessary, we fill the need by providing our own. This means we can be very flexible with ramble planning and we don't have to plan our walks around the availability of public toilet facilities.

We are deeply indebted to Robin Helby for managing the loan scooter and mobile unit services. Robin is also being helped by our new volunteer, Mike, who takes over the on-site service provision from time to time to give Robin a break.

We are now busy planning our rambles programme for the summer 2008 programme. We would very much like to hear from our members and friends about places you would like to visit and details of routes we might use. Remember we plan rambles of around 6 ½ to 8 miles, and these might be easy, moderate or more challenging.

Yours sincerely



Mike Bruton

PS We very much want to hear from YOU, members and friends. Please write or email us with suggested ramble areas you like and routes we might use. Do include photographs whenever possible. We plan to serve you, and we need your input and ideas!

Please email to: chairman@disabledramblers.co.uk or write to: The Disabled Ramblers, 14 Belmont Park Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 6HT. You can also phone Mike Bruton on: 01628 621414.

PPS: Registration of Class 3 vehicles

A letter received via Rt Hon Theresa May MP.

Mike Bruton's MP, Theresa May is proving a good friend, and has been trying to get to the bottom of the recent decision of the DVLA to demand that all Class 3 vehicles are registered with them. You will know that this requirement has been on the Statute books for at least 10 years, but has only recently been pushed after the publication of a very critical and alarmist article in the 'Mail on Sunday'

Theresa recently received a letter from Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, a Minister of State at the department of Transport. This included the following (*note my italics*):

"The requirement to licence and register Class 3 invalid carriages *is not a new one*. All mechanically propelled vehicles are *required by law to be registered and licensed*. Class 2 vehicles, however, have historically been exempt from the legal requirements on an extra-statutory basis, due to their very limited road use. DVLA's priority is to provide users, suppliers and manufacturers with advice about the registration and licensing requirements, *rather than take enforcement action against non-compliance*.*

The research carried out by the Department to which Mr Bruton refers** is being evaluated and developed from the perspective of the use of invalid carriages and getting the balance right between the needs of mobility scooter users – who rely on these vehicles – and the needs of other people. I can confirm that this further detailed work is being given priority and that we will be responding to the research findings shortly."

*Note: an interesting statement – is this a hint for Class 3 vehicle users?

**Note: this research ended with a report dated February 2006. see: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/tipws/pwps/ This report may be a precursor of legislation to come!

My First Outing with the Disabled Ramblers

On 7th of June I was flying down the M4 and the M5 in my little Kangoo quite excited that I felt well enough to be on my way to Okehampton to meet new friends after looking forward to it for a few weeks. The new friends were members of the Disabled Ramblers, an organisation that I had joined at the end of the previous year, but whom I had never met.

I had booked myself in at a B and B in Station Road in Okehampton (as we were meeting at the station next morning it turned out to be a good move). The B and B was excellent and after a big breakfast I made for the Station. One or two people had arrived and, after introducing myself, it turned out they were new as well. After half an hour most people had arrived and it was introductions all round. After Dr Mike Bruton, our Chairman, had said a few words, we were off.

Our route leading out of the car park was an old railway line which had been converted into an excellent cycle track, which had a good surface to start our weekend. We ran into one little snag, a gate that was hardly wide enough for the Trampers to get through. I took a photo of this, to take back to show the Wardens of the Brecon Beacons National Park and other people who were interested.

There were a lot of wild flowers along the way - one or two quite rare, I believe. The cycle track ran through some beautiful countryside that crossed a viaduct at one point, from where we had a view over quite some distance. Lunch time found us at a pub (where else would we be). We stopped for an hour and then made our way back to the starting point at the Station, which had a café that sold the most delicious cream teas, I think some of my new friends put on a few pounds in those couple of days, I did.

Day Two

Again, after a large breakfast, I was off to meet my friends of yesterday at Okehampton Army Camp (where some of the group had done some of their National Service). Every body eventually arrived and after some chat we were off on some of the old military roads that crisscross Dartmoor. It was another lovely day and I covered up as I had burnt the previous day. Everybody seemed to be in a very happy mood, and I never heard anyone complain at all in the three days we were out. I could guess from my own problems what a lot of pain and suffering some of them had been through and still were going through in a lot of cases.

Through the day we had to cross two fords one narrow and shallow and the other longer and deeper. At the first ford there was a lady who had one of the smaller scooters which could not go through the water, so a dashing young man with a "Gambo" (Welsh for trailer) on the back of his Trampler came to her rescue. The scooter was loaded on to the gambo and away he went through the ford. Then we came to ford number two which was longer and deeper. Most people crossed at a narrower part of the brook and as I was behind I watched as the dashing young man (same one) went straight through, with great élan. Right, I thought, here goes and away I went through after him.



Crossing the Ford

Up until 1994 I had been a very active person, rock climbing, caving and mountaineering and was a member of the British Alpine Club, now I hope I have found some way of maybe getting some outdoor activity back. A couple of hundred yards further on was the "aahh" factor of the day, a lamb had just been born, and was just starting to find its feet, to the delight of some of the ladies present.

At this point I must mention the two young men with us who did an excellent job of looking after us. One was Robert Taylor the senior warden, and his assistant warden was Peter Rich. They both did a first class job and were in all ways a credit to the Dartmoor National Park and themselves. I hope we meet again.

Soon we were back to our vehicles and the day was not quite over as quite a few made for an afternoon tea again at the Railway Station.

Day Three

On day three we met at Challacombe Farm more or less in the centre of Dartmoor. When we arrived there an entomologist there who, I think, had caught a number

of moths during the night to show us. I had never seen such big moths in this country before. As well as the entomologist, there was young lady who was an archaeologist who, I think, worked for the D N P. She was very interesting and was a mine of information about the Farm and surrounding area. I was very interested in the old Dartmoor Longhouse as I had been brought up in a Welsh longhouse which was built, part of it, in the 1600's. There was little difference between the two.

Leaving the Farmhouse we followed a track which meandered its way through old lead works and other bits of historical archaeology. One of the buildings had been a large cottage kept by a lady ? named Diana who with the help of some young ladies ? kept a guest house for some of the men who worked there (and if you believe that you'll believe anything). Toward noon we came again unto a Public House, I can't believe how pubs pop up at just the right time. After lunch we returned along the same path back to the Farmhouse where the lady of the house awaited us with tea and cakes. We said our goodbyes and away home.

That was my first, but definitely not my last, outing with The Disabled Ramblers. Or, as a gentleman with a London accent said one lunch time "Cor! The Wrinkleys Hells Angels" If you really stop and think about it, it's quite a compliment at our age.

Elwyn D Davies.

Challacombe Farm

Following the Disabled Ramblers visit, we've been asked to do a short article about our farm.

Challacombe Farm, in the heart of Dartmoor National Park, is a working hill farm (beef, sheep & ponies), set in a valley that has been farmed more or less continuously for around 4000 years, and by us for about 30 years. This has left a rich legacy of archaeological remains; the nearby Bronze Age settlement of Grimspound, medieval field systems and ruins of a village, and fascinating evidence of Dartmoor's tin mining industry.

With the help of grants from Dartmoor National Park Authority and others, and the support of our landlord, the Duchy of Cornwall, the farm is managed to balance the needs of wildlife, protecting the archaeology, providing good public access and remaining financially viable.

The farm is a haven for wildlife, particularly birds, and insects, and we are a popular spot for bird watchers, horse riders, cyclists and walkers. Over the past year we have been improving the bridlepaths around the farm to make them more accessible, and now have a reasonable level path leading up the valley to the neighbouring farm (Headland Warren which has accessible accommodation), and a more challenging route suitable for Trampers & more powerful mobility scooters, along old mining tracks through Soussons Forest to the famous Warren House Inn. If you visit, feel free to park by the farm house.

Though we work hard to farm here, I am still amazed and feel fortunate to live in the midst of such awe inspiring countryside and so wish to share it with others; especially those who would normally find a walk on the open moor difficult'.

To enable visitors to find out more about the farm we have a website, which includes detailed information about the gradients and surfaces of the paths around the farm. This is still under development, so please let us know of any additions you would like to see – the address is www.challacombefarm.co.uk .

I hope you are able to visit.

Min Cullum & family.

Culag Woods All Ability Path

<http://www.culagwoods.org.uk/featurela.htm>

I would like to thank my friend and chairman of the Disabled Ramblers, Dr Mike Bruton, for highlighting a newly laid path on the Little Assynt Estate near Lochinver on the far north-west coast of Scotland.



Culag View Point

Unless you live north of the Caledonian Canal you are unlikely to want to visit Little Assynt Estate but as we were holidaying in Sutherland at Carbisdale Castle Scottish Youth Hostel, an hour's car journey from east to west coasts, we decided to visit. Our road was single track over beautiful moorland and as it was the height of summer we were held up behind not 1, not 2 but 4 caravans. Touring Scotland north of the Caledonian Canal has to be taken at a leisurely pace.

And here I can do no better than to quote from the beautifully produced LITTLE ASSYNT ESTATE leaflet:

“Culag Community Woodland Trust (CCWT) was formed in 1995 to manage Culag Wood in Lochinver. It acquired Little Assynt Estate, 3000 acres of striking Assynt landscape with lochs, flows, secret glens, ancient woods and planted new ones. CCWT aims to hand on to future generations a more healthy environment, and welcomes visitors who want to explore the landscape, look for wildlife, fish the lochs or get more deeply involved. Those whose physical abilities are limited will enjoy the new, specially created path and facilities at Loch Leitir Easaidh.”

There's a good car park 10k east of Lochinver at grid ref. NC174276 on the A837 on the north side of Loch Assynt. The All Ability path begins at a two-way, fully accessible gate. It is about 1.5 km in length, constructed so that it is suitable for wheels. The first 0.5 km has a gradient no more than 1:12, passing through a sweep of boggy ground and takes you to the first facility, a fully accessible soakaway toilet and a covered rest point at the lochside. Skirting a large boggy area, you have excellent views of the western cliffs of the great mountain range of Quinag. Beyond this, the path begins to rise and it is here that you need more assistance — either a very strong pusher or a stout battery for your countryside scooter. Over the next kilometre there are short stretches of about 1:6 gradients. However, if it is possible to climb the branch to the flat-topped hillock there are wonderful views.

A further branch, signposted inaccessible to wheelchairs, links up with the Loch an t-Sabhail waymarked path that continues for a further 3k circular. As I was in my countryside scooter I decided to attempt this route. However, the gradients immediately became more challenging (1:4) and the cross-drainage, which had until now been accessible, became a barrier to my wheels. I have a Sterling 3-wheeler and had I been in a Trampler I'm sure I could have gone further.

So if you're up in the far north of Scotland I strongly recommend a visit to this new All Ability path.

Eva McCracken

Dear Editor

I am a frequent visitor to the countryside using my 3-wheeled outdoor scooter. I have recently joined ScotWays (previously Scottish Rights of Way Society) in order to try to raise awareness of wheelchair users who want to go rambling. Some of you may remember me as the author of “WALKING ON WHEELS”.

There are two Acts of Parliament, the Disability Discrimination Act and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 which should improve outdoor access for all. I was wondering if any of your readers have experienced a situation regarding access to countryside facilities in Scotland e.g. paths, trails or visitor centres, which have been improved as a consequence of either of these Acts.

The Walking on Wheels Trust would like to offer a free copy of my book, “WALKING ON WHEELS”, to the first 5 submissions. Please write or email your example eva.mccracken@getreal.co.uk

Walking in the Lake District

April's article by Rosie Norris on Walking with Wheels prompts me to add recent rambling experiences. My two sisters, parents, husband Richard and I rented a cottage in Borrowdale in early March. Beforehand I phoned the Keswick Tourist Info and asked if they had any leaflets for disabled walkers. I received “Countryside Access for People with Limited Mobility” (Lake District National Park, 1996, ISBN 0-906421-45-4) on payment of £1.00. It's an A5, 32 page booklet with 23 walks between 0.5 and 8 miles, some circular, most linear routes.



Blencathra and Derwentwater

Each of the walks receives a route grade for Surface Quality and Gradient from 1 – 3. Surface Quality 1 = tarmac; 2 = Smoothish, with minimum dirt on hands for self-propelled; 3 = Semi-rough: attention given to remove worst rocks and tree roots. Still difficult for self-propeller.

Gradient 1 = up to 1 in 12; 2 = Uphill/downhill: gradients over 1 in 12; 3 = Steep: self-propellers will have great difficulty on sections and care is needed.

Provided are a sketch map and grid reference for 1:25000 Outdoor Leisure Ordnance Survey map, parking place and wc if available, features of special interest and a short description of the walk.

We've holidayed in Borrowdale often and we're all in love with Catbells, so we started with Friar's Crag on the shore of Derwentwater, labelled Surface 2, Gradient 1. My scooter is no Trampler, more the type you might see little old ladies riding around on but hey! let's not give up before we start, I can travel with that little scooter in a Ford Focus boot and that's all that was and still is needed for everyday pottering.

It was a 2 mile circular from the Keswick landing stages, which would be milling with tourists in summer. The fall of snow on the previous day had stayed on the fell tops and we had bright blue sky and sunshine in cold fresh air for the whole week! This is not your everyday Lakeland weather. The walk took us past stunning tree roots which John Ruskin had commented on in 1824, then turned away from the lake and on to a footpath parallel to the Borrowdale Road. Here we left mam and dad, both 85+, till they could be picked up, and carried on down through a wood back to the landing stages and a cup of hot chocolate for all. The last half of the walk felt longer than I'd expected and also the surface was a bit rocky, but a man in front was a self-propeller and he made it, so did I.

Next day Richard and I went up Catbells Terrace, less than 0.5 miles, surface 3, gradient 3. I don't like manmade paths and surfaces but the Lake District is having to deal with human erosion and on this walk we met some schoolchildren doing a field trip and questionnaire about visitors' use of the fells. Apart from one ascent a year after diagnosis, this was for me the only way to 'set foot' on Catbells since MS tried a bit of felling itself. The gradient was a bit much for my scooter batteries but Richard pushed a bit whenever I stopped. I think I took a lot out of that scooter but I wouldn't have missed it. It was freezing and Blencathra looked spectacular in the north.

We did a couple more easy walks, Maggie's Bridge to Loweswater and White Moss, near Rydal. The circular

route round Tarn Hows (Surface 2 and 3, Gradient 1 & 3) was the hardest as it is not yet finished. We just kept going and Richard again did the difficult job of pushing when I stopped mid-hill. Tough but satisfying.

I expect this booklet is known by many a disabled Rambler and I hope some more tales can be told in a future newsletter.

Marian Martin

Have Chair - Will Travel (Anywhere)

Dr Mike Bruton, Chairman and Founder of the Disabled Ramblers Association, and Lynn Punchcard Editor of Forward have asked me to test and review the recently introduced manual wheelchair, the Trekinetic K-2.

For me one of the most inappropriate phrases in the English language is "wheelchair-bound". My wheelchair, or to be more accurate wheelchairs, do not bind me they liberate me. I have one wheelchair that is great in an outdoor urban environment but it is hopeless off road because of its small casters and not good in an indoor environment because of its large camber which makes it too wide for many doors. I have a purpose designed and built cross-country wheelchair that is great off road but very unsuitable indoors and finally I have a chair with no camber that is good indoors.

This "horses for courses wheelchair policy" is all very well if you can afford it, have sufficient storage room and can transfer easily from chair to chair. The K-2 has been designed to be an adaptable wheelchair suitable for both the urban and off road environment, "a horse for all courses" !



The Trekinetic K-2

Manual wheelchairs have improved dramatically over the last 30 years. This improvement has been gradual,

progressive and evolutionary: the introduction of rigid frames, cambers, lightweight materials etc. However the basic design of rear wheel drive, a tubular frame with two large wheels at the rear and two smaller casters at the front has remained.

The K-2 was designed by an engineer with a background in designing components for Formula One racing cars. Its design is revolutionary. No tubular frame but a carbon fibre bucket seat that acts as a monocoque "chassis". Not rear wheel drive but front wheel drive with two large wheels at the front and a smaller one at the rear.

The camber of the wheels is adjustable from parallel to up to 24° by simply rotating the axle; thus giving the stability of cambered wheels for outside use or the narrowness of parallel wheels for indoor use. The rear castor has a patented device that keeps it in a straight line when wheeling forward even when crossing a slope thus obviating the need for constant one arm pushing to keep in a straight line. The rear castor has a shock absorber which can be used to alter the inclination of the chair depending on preference and circumstances of use. The footplate is telescopic. The K-2 comes with hub brakes that can be used for slowing, steering or parking. There are removable side plates to protect clothing and even an umbrella that fixes to the chair.

A number of extras are available including rear push bar, water bottle, seatbelt and transfer platforms. I have tried the chair off road on a gravel track, a dirt track and grass of varying lengths. I have used it along my high street, in an office, the supermarket, Starbucks and in my local leisure centre. The K-2 coped with all these variable environments perfectly well.

The chair does take a little getting used to. The angle of pushing is different to a standard wheelchair and requires a slightly different muscle action. I thought the rolling resistance better than a standard chair despite my chair having large very knobbly mountain bike tyres. I found that I could push the chair up steeper inclines than in my own wheelchairs; this seems to be because of the ability to brace oneself against the back of the chair when pushing hard. The chair is stable, probably because of its low centre of gravity. The rear castor arrangement makes it virtually impossible to tip backwards, the telescopic footplate doubles as an anti-tip bar in the front and a camber if activated increases lateral stability. The bucket seat chair provides good lateral support to the trunk.

The chair I tried was fitted with large aggressively treaded mountain bike tyres. These were excellent off

road particularly on wet grass. However they made the wheels heavy and increased rolling resistance. I would like to have tried the chair with a compromise tyre, one that was smooth in the middle but heavily treaded on the outside. The manufacturer tells me they are able to offer, as an optional extra, a spare set of wheels with smooth tyres. It would be very interesting to see how easy the K-2 was to push if it was fitted with lightweight, narrow, high pressure tyres.

The K-2 comes with thin seat liners. These would not be suitable for most spinal-cord injured users as they would offer little protection from pressure sores. However specially shaped Roho and foam cushions are available.

With the wheels removed and the frame folded the chair forms a fairly compact load approximately 880 x 400 x 620 mm. weighing approximately 9 kg.



The K-2 is beautifully engineered and is by far the most versatile wheelchair I have ever used. It is the only wheelchair I have ever come across that, without attaching any adaptations, is perfectly at home on road, off road and indoors.

In conclusion I would say that the Trekinetic K-2 is the ideal chair for someone who wants a chair that they can use for the normal activities of daily living and go off road.

For further details and a price list see www.trekinetic.com or email trekinetic@aol.com or phone 01895 230 243.

For details about wheelchair rambling see www.disabledramblers.co.uk

Roger Fitzwater T12

Bonding with Scarlet (the Bug) Part I

'That's it then' said Adrian, from Empowered Mobility, handing me my invoice/receipt for a 4-wheel Sterling 'Little Gem' mobility scooter. 'Let me know if there's anything else you need to know.' With that he waved goodbye, got into his Ford Transit van and drove off.

I looked down to the garage floor at this minute, little red shopping buggy and wondered 'how will you get on...' Here is my experience (so far) of *bonding with Scarlet...*

The instructions (like all instructions these days) are not that clear to follow, and in my view created more problems, rather than being 'shown' what to do, which Adrian had done in his shop. I, of course had not written anything down then. So armed with the written instructions (typos and figs not corresponding with text), I sat at my table with a coffee and wrote down lists of what to do: breaking it up, putting it together, charging the battery, driving it, parking it, oh everything...

My next session was alone in the garage with Scarlet - objective to take her apart; lift all the bits into the boot of my car; then lift all the bits out again; assemble and put away. Well it went OK, apart from the blue language...although

a) *it is worth having an old clean towel laid out on the sill/lip of the boot so it doesn't get scratched or the buggy doesn't get scratched.*

b) *put all the buggy bits near to the boot of the car so that you can reach them to lift into the car.*

c) *pack the boot up with the battery and seat pieces in first, then the wheels/floor in last + basket. Then use the towels to put between the pieces so that they are packed in well and don't slide around.*

d) *don't underestimate how tired you'll get after all this. You can load the buggy the day before for example. You are expecting a day of shopping or whatever on the buggy as well.*

e) *put the key on a big key ring...*

Once Scarlet was back at her end of the garage she was covered with my old bicycle cover (this keeps her clean, seat etc, and the bugs off!) A week passed and it was time to try her out for real on a Sunday in the local

town some 4 miles away. I charged the battery beforehand (overnight, power in the garage on a timer switch). So on the Saturday I drove her round to the back of the car, turned off the power, and broke her up, put all of it into the boot and congratulated myself on my skill (!) Then I looked at the front of my trousers - covered in grease! So, the moral of the story is: know which parts are greased and be careful, or wipe the grease off the kit and be careful that it doesn't touch you as you are loading and unloading.

Anyway on the Sunday I put her together in the car park and went off on my run round the little level town. It all went well and I got home and unpacked it etc. I couldn't help thinking to myself wouldn't it be better to either be able to walk OR get a slave...

Make a note of things to take with you in the car/buggy when on expeditions: stick (one which breaks down to go in the basket, wet weather gear, rag, a couple of old towels, battery charger and timer plug).

Carol Felton

Editor's note - Due to lack of space, Part 2 of Carol's article will appear in the January 2008 Newsletter

Note from the Editor

In the past, John Smythson has kindly made available to members a number of informative leaflets and booklets on accessible routes for mobility scooter and wheelchair users. Because of the demand for these publications, John has asked me to inform readers that he has now run out, and no longer has any spare leaflets or booklets.

If members would like to write an article for inclusion in future newsletter, please send (together with any accompanying photos) to :

editor@disabledramblers.co.uk

Other queries can be addressed (as appropriate) to :

chairman@disabledramblers.co.uk
membership@disabledramblers.co.uk
secretary@disabledramblers.co.uk

In order to increase the number of routes available to members on the 'Routes' page of our website (www.disabledramblers.co.uk), information is still needed on 'tried and tested routes' around the country.
